



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

JAN 3 2005

Mr. Ralph Rubio
President, Association of Monterey Bay
Area Governments
445 Reservation Road
Marina, California 93933

Dear Mr. Rubio:

Thank you for your letter to Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) regarding recruitment procedures for the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) Advisory Council (Advisory Council). Your letter was referred to NOAA's National Ocean Service for a response. NOAA appreciates your interest in the operation of the Advisory Council and the time you devoted to developing your recommendations. We appreciate your stated desire to strengthen the role of both the Advisory Council and the MBNMS.

As you may be aware, in response to your concerns the MBNMS staff recently added several additional public outreach and involvement steps, building upon past procedures utilizing the media and electronic listservs to enhance recruitment of Advisory Council members. While in keeping with national guidelines governing the operation of all the National Marine Sanctuary Program's (NMSP) Advisory Councils, these additional steps will enhance local participation in the recruitment of Advisory Council members. These steps include engaging an extensive mailing list of regional stakeholder groups, which will invite them to help identify and solicit potential Advisory Council member applicants, and provide these groups and individual community members with the opportunity to make recommendations in support of qualified candidates they know have applied. With your help, we believe these steps will benefit all involved.

The MBNMS staff will discuss your letter and recommendations with the Advisory Council at its February meeting to provide the NMSP with advice on your recommendations, as well as the actions MBNMS has taken to address your concerns. The MBNMS staff will discuss any Advisory Council advice they receive with you and your staff. We urge you to continue to work collaboratively with the MBNMS to address these important issues.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Spinrad, Ph.D.
Assistant Administrator



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